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BOB SILVERMAN AND SAUL DISKIN, EDITORS

S P A C E S H I P

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cover by Jim Lewis; interior by Stan Segal

E D I T O R I A L

Some readers may notice that this issue of SPACE-SHIP contains a fewer number of items than any other in the past year; we were forced to omit our regular departments in order to fit in the conclusion of ON A SILVER PLATTER by our pro author, "August Argyle". NOTICE TO FAPANS: The next regular issue of SPACESHIP (October) will NOT be circulated in FAPA; instead, there will be a 4-page FAPA edition containing various comments on the mailing. Interested Fapans may obtain copies of the regular issue for a nickel to the usual place. Next issue will contain the first fan story of an author totally new to fandom, Richard K. Verdan. You'll be seeing lots more of this fellow, though. On the same bill, there's a cute little shorty by David English, called "The Exterminators"--with a neat twist.

Oh, yes...there's a chance that SPACESHIP's format may undergo a radical change...maybe...

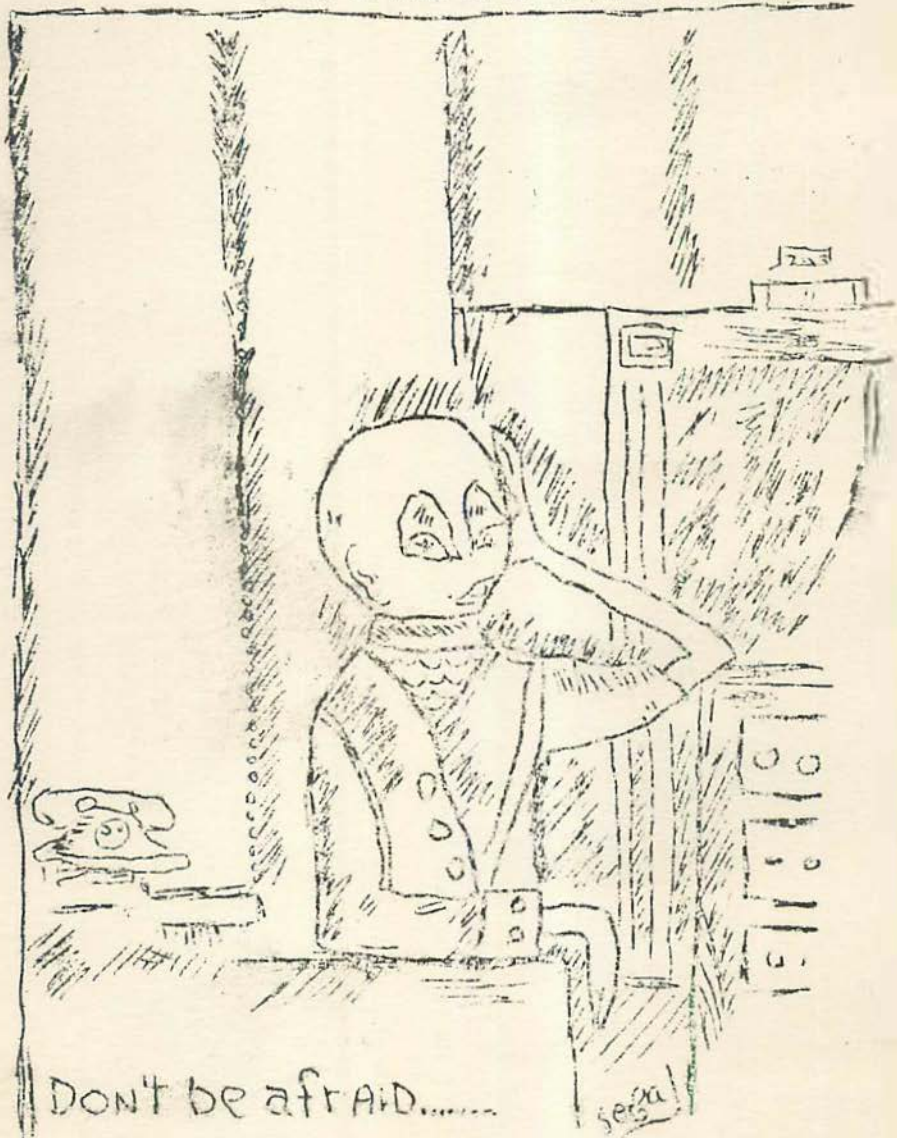
Bob & Saul

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ON A SILVER PLATTER....

BY AUGUST ARGYLE



ON A SILVER PLATTER by August Argyll

Synopsis of part one: Lieutenant Craig Melton was the first to man a ship to the moon. In the ship VANGUARD, when he reaches the moon, he suddenly is transferred to the dark side, where he is greeted by a strange, bald man who calls himself an inhabitant of the moon. Melton is told that he has been brought to the city of the Selenites for "observation", and that he would be shown the rest of the city in a little while. With that the moonman had vanished, his chair suddenly empty, with only the depression in its cushion testifying to his late presence.

PART TWO

"Probably took the short way home", Melton said drily. For a time he wondered if he should escape, but finally decided against it. He was guarded, of course. And even if not, he wouldn't get very far with the Selenites' apparent ability to read minds. They were very likely probing his that very moment.

So with a mental shrug and a sigh of exhaustion he stretched out on the couch and slept, not even noticing the automatic dimming of the light as his head touched the pillow.

The city of the Selenites was impressive. Melton had to admit it after completing only half the tour arranged for him upon his awakening. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about it--and the farms that stretched away from it in every direction--was the lighting system. These amazing beings had found a way to manufacture sunlight on a vast scale, and it wouldn't have to take a back seat even to the sun itself in efficiency. Melton walked thru streets as bright as any on Earth in midday.

The people he saw were clad exactly as his guide in loose robes of various hues and thin-soled sandals. Save for the children none of them seemed to be under the six-foot mark and Melton, though himself no small man, began to feel like a pygmy thrown among a race of giants. They definitely were not hostile to him, however, many of them greeting him in his own tongue and paus-

ing in their activities to watch in friendly amusement his reactions to the marvels of the city

The business buildings in the "downtown" section consisted of only five or six floors, but were infinitely more beautiful than Barth's skyscrapers in design. They were all built of stone; and indeed, outside of that used in machinery of the most vital importance, there was very little metal in evidence anywhere. Plastics, too, played substantial roles in construction, being utilized greatly in dwelling units and furniture of all kinds.

Roads were symmetrically laid out and nowhere was there a fracture to be seen in them; just one more respect-commanding proof of the thorough workmanship of these beings. But Melton could not see their need of streets at all, in view of the astounding method of transportation they possessed; and he inquired about this of the Selenite, who by now had identified himself as Nenn Dalka. The answer was that "thought-travel"--that was the best term Dalka could find for it in Melton's vocabulary--required intense concentration that was a strain even to them, and thus was employed only upon special occasions. Melton couldn't decide just what had been the "special occasion" for Dalka's using it a few hours before, unless to prove the power to him.

The tour completed, and hunger satisfied at a spotlessly clean public eating house, Dalka led the way back to Melton's quarters. And there in the spacious grounds behind the dwelling Craig joyfully caught sight of the Vanguard. He started forward eagerly, then stopped short and looked suspiciously at the Selenite. Was this a trap of some sort?

The smile on the delicate face told him nothing.

"It's all right", Dalka said. "It was moved here while we were away, but nothing in it has been touched. We'll go aboard, if you like".

Still Melton hesitated, his distrust of the Moon Men growing by leaps and bounds. But finally he nodded and they entered the cramped confines of the ship, Dalka looking around in mild interest

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at the incomprehensible maze of machinery--the Craig almost surely knew that all of it was ridiculously simple to the Selenite.

He took a long time with his examination. But at the end of it he had discovered nothing to confirm his belief that the Vanguard had been tampered with. It was a crazy misgiving, of course. If his captors wanted to kill him they could have finished him off in space, he didn't doubt. Still, they were an alien race with alien thought-processes.

He found the gun a few minutes later. It was on a shelf of a locker, along with his air-suit and other paraphernalia. Heart racing madly, he looked to make sure Dalka was still forward inspecting the control panel. Then, carefully masking his thoughts, he quickly slipped the blue-gleaming service automatic into a trousers pocket, closed the locker and resumed his progress through the ship as if nothing had happened to bring him a new hope of escape.

He made a grim decision. This would be his best chance, while Dalka was the only Selenite he would have to cope with. If he could only keep him from reading the plan in his mind, pull the trigger before he could summon his invincible powers, he would succeed. If he failed, then the Selenites might get the idea of using their possession of the moon for the same dire purposes as plotted by Earth's governments. They appeared peaceful enough, but Melton put no stock in character-reading. Maybe they just had not known of their planetary neighbors, and knowing now, would decide to do away with them on the theory that a dead possible enemy is better than a live potential friend.

Melton hated to do it, even then. Dalka had treated him with kindness, and indeed all with whom he had come in contact here had gone out of their way to make his brief stay the most pleasant of experiences. But he had to warn Earth. Tell them of the danger!

Dalka came from the control room, his walk almost an effortless glide. There was unsuspected grace in those long, deceptively awkward legs,

likely made possible by the moon's lesser gravity. He approached Melton with a smile, placed a friendly hand on Cragg's shoulder.

"Your ship captures my fancy", he said, his low, melodious voice slowly asking, "Are there any others like it, man from Earth?"

Melton shook off the hand with a rapid movement and stopped back, face drawn in determined lines. "You know damned well there isn't, Dalka", he rasped. "But there will be, and soon. Thousand of them. And they'll come armed to the teeth. Either your race will submit to them unconditionally or be wiped out of existence. I don't like it, believe me, but that's how it is--that is how it's always been. You represent a danger that we can't afford to ignore."

He drew the gun.

The first bullet was aimed at Dalka's broad chest. But it never reached its target. Somewhere in its flight it simply disappeared into another time and space, thrown there by a force titanic past understanding. And Dalka stood, eternal calm unshaken, but his face now mirroring an ineffable regret at something known only to him.

Melton cursed vehemently and fired again. Again the speeding missile was warded off in the same, astonishing manner. Wildly, he blasted shot after futile shot at his unattainable mark and, when the hammer clicked on empty chambers, threw the gun itself in a last gesture of defiance and collapsed on the floor, sobbing brokenly.

Dalka looked down on him pityingly from his majestic height. He spoke, and Craig heard him as if he spoke from far away.

"I'm sorry, Melton. We thought this would happen, but hoped it would not. You see, we realized your violent nature when we first sensed you in space, and brought you here so we might observe your reaction to finding the moon inhabited by intelligent beings, beings that conceivably could do your world harm. We know that animalistic traits can be controlled; we have controlled ours. As representative of your kind we

must be done. By mass concentration we should accomplish it quite readily."

public spectacles, so everyone should be the

gave you the chance to prove that you could control yours, and had you done so we would have welcomed you and all who followed as brothers.-- We watched to see if you were able.

"But you were not. We put you to the test, and you failed. You would have done murder a moment ago to gain a freedom that was never denied you, had you asked it.

"You are a savage, Melton."

It was true. The unbearable realization crushed him, destroyed all of his long-held beliefs about himself at one fell swoop. In the ultimate analysis his motivations were the same as those of the most degraded gang-land killer. Why?--he asked himself dully. Why? Was it really human nature? Or was there something radically wrong in the order of things on Earth that kept man chained to his baser instincts?

The question was beyond his answering.

Dalka was again speaking, his tone meditative. "Something must be done with you of Earth, of course. As you say, more of your ships will come eventually. The thoughts of their crews will be of conquest, and rather would we be killed than kill them. But there is a better solution...." He paused and looked down.

"Your race would give up anything to have the moon--is that right, Melton?"

The Lieutenant nodded, bewildered by the query. "Even their lives", he mumbled. "What more could a person give?" He stared.

"A point", Dalka agreed. "And if that is so, then it follows that anything less than that would be a profit. A great profit, by your sense of values. Yes...yes...". He fell silent and seemed to be concentrating. Melton looked at him fearfully.

"What are you doing, Dalka?"

"I am giving my people instructions on what must be done. By mass concentration we should accomplish it quite readily."

Melton saw it then; and he flung himself at the Selenite's feet, pleading wildly with him.

"You can't do it, Dalka! Give me another chance to prove myself...another chance. Please!"

Dalka did not answer. And Melton knew an irresistible force was reaching out across space, reaching out with many times the speed of light and knowing no barriers, grasping with invisible hands--and returning as quickly, as unopposably with its burden, its living burden!

The thing was done.

Dalka went to the forward port, Melton following numbly and looking out with unwilling eyes at the incredible scene.

For out there, filling the streets of the city and dotting the surrounding farms, rising to their feet in stunned bewilderment, was every man, woman and child who but a moment before had walked the Earth! A whole race--every last individual--had been taken from its home bodily and transferred in the wink of an eye to the satellite of their planet, through 250,000 miles of empty space!

There was little panic, for the people were still too dazed to realize fully what had happened to them. They milled about purposelessly, asking worried questions of each other and receiving the same questions in reply. Aryan mingled with Jew, Southerner with Negro in this common disaster, their prejudices forgotten--if only for the moment. Melton stared.

"You have what you wanted", Dalka's voice came softly to Melton. "That which you of Earth have coveted through the ages is now yours, to do with as you will. There is room for all in this valley; you will never want for food and the unchanging climate makes shelter needless, though there is ample material for the construction of dwellings if desired. All yours. Forever."

"We can't progress!" Melton realized the listless voice was his. "There are no metals to build spaceships. Space-travel should be the

logical next step in our development."

"There are other frontiers to be conquered, many of them. You will progress, and one day you will find the secret which we have found; then space travel will be yours in the same manner as it is ours. And when that time comes strife, greed and hate will have been banished from your thoughts and you will be ready to take your place with all other intelligent races in the universe."

"I have ordered that instructions be left for your technicians on the operation of the machines here. And now we complete the trade. We have given you the moon, and in return we take Earth. We feel no emotion in the matter; no joy over what we gain, no sorrow at what we leave behind. We have merely fulfilled for Terrans their oldest, most cherished dream. It was the only thing--you get the moon on a silver platter, "...we go, Melton, and you and I will not meet again on this plane of existence. But know you have been likeable in spite of all. Perhaps someday, somewhere...until then, goodbye..."

Dalka was gone, vanished from Melton's ken. He saw the walls of the Vanguard grow suddenly transparent around him, and then it too had made the jump, drawn after the Solonite into that other unfathomable dimension. And Craig stood on velvety grass, listening to the querulous voices drifting to him from the streets. But those who could have explained to him were no longer here.

And as he stood thus, humble and bowed, Melton wondered. Had Dalka been right? Would man rise from his ignorance, now that he was free of his old ties? Would he truly become the noble being Dalka prophesied? Or would he continue in the same old loathsome rut--war, poverty, vice, crime.

Unanswerable questions, all.

But one thing Melton know--knew with utmost certainty, as he strode forth to meet the others.

This was a new chance, and the final chance. The forked road again lay before humankind, as long

(concluded on page 11)

Once upon a time,
 Men had tales to tell,
 And songs to sing as well.
 Once upon a time,
 We heard the glory yell,
 The organ and the bell.
 Once upon a time,
 The atom in a shell,
 Burst the bonds of Hell.
 Once upon a time,
 A total silence fell.
 --Peter B. Clarke

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 COPY IN * The dawn's first yellow glow.
 ADVANCE: * --Todd Convell

NOTE TO MEMBERS. Ackerman, Burbee, Condra, Crane,
 Dougherty, Evans, Nuttall, Pendue, Riddle, Riggs, Lacey,
 Rotsler, Sneyry, Stibbard, Widner, Wolston, and other
 Californ: Dave English's notes that California was
 named after an imaginary island in a 16th-century
 fantasy book, The Deeds of Esplandian! No won-
 der there are so many "California's", with a 300-
 year head start!

"C A H C E L L E D"
 a dianetic fantasy by
 SAUL DJSKIN

Dudley Farnham was in a bad shape. He groped at the wall for a niche to which he might cling. He stumbled and fell. The pain shot through his stomach like fiery demons out of Hell, playin tag at his expense. Blood smeared on the corridor floor. Hazily, Farnham saw the sign on the office door a few feet away from him: Thomas J. Fortune, Dianetic Auditor. "Only a few feet to his office", thought Dudley; "only a few feet to cure". Strong hands grasped him around the armpits, lifted him to an erect position, and carried him into the office.

Dudley found himself being eased down onto something cool; he felt the soft, smooth touch of the leather of a couch beneath him. The doctor entered the room, a glass in his hand. "Here, drink this; you'll feel better", he advised.

As Farnham ~~passed~~ back the glass he found his head suddenly cleared. "You must be Dudley Farnham", said the doctor.

"Yes, of course", agreed Dudley. He smiled weakly. "But how did you know?"

"The last psychiatrist you went to phoned me and said you'd be over. "I had hoped you'd come, Mr. Farnham. I think I might be able to help you. But first, tell me your troubles."

"I can't exactly explain it myself", said Dudley. "It all began about 7 months ago. I began getting fierce pains in my stomach; pains that I couldn't bear. I went to my family doctor to find out if it were any of the usual ailments-- --you know, like ulcers. It wasn't." He looked up. "My doctor advised me to see a psychiatrist", he continued. "I did, and in turn, he told me to see you". Farnham touched his stomach. "Sometimes, the pain becomes so unbearable that I black out ...like outside just then." Fortune said nothing. At length he said, "let us start treatment now, please". The doctor got up, walked to the window.

ow, drew the blinds, and turned. "Would you please remove your jacket; make yourself as comfortable as possible." Portune began to speak in a low, soft, mellow voice. "Look at the ceiling", he commanded. "When I count to seven, your eyes will close. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven." Dudley closed his eyes lightly. Portune's voice droned on. "When I say 'cancelled', everything which I have said to you while you are in therapy will have no force on you. Is that understood?" Farnham mumbled assent.

"Do you recall the day the pain started?", asked Portune. "Yes", Farnham answered. After an hour, Dr. Portune had learned the shock of his wife's leaving him with their child was evidently the source of Farnham's pain. He had recalled that he had been reading a science-fiction novel at the time, concerning a superman. This seemed of little import to Portune. Farnham spoke disjointedly. Thoughts rapidly ran through the hypnoticist's mind. He was now almost positive he could cure this man.

BRRRRRRRING! The doorbell rang. "Damn", muttered the professor, as he rose to answer the bell in the next room. Outside the door was a salesman, a toothbrush salesman. "No thank you, we don't want any!", exclaimed Portune, and he closed the door. The salesman put his foot in it. "Really, if you'll excuse me--I'm in a terrible hurry", said Portune.

"But these toothbrushes are the finest on the market", interjected the salesman.

"JUMPING HORNEED TOADS!", shrieked the professor, as he bounded across the room when the realization that he had not given the 'canceller' to his patient flashed into his mind. As he entered the room, he stopped and stared out the window, horrified. Dudley Farnham stood on the windowsill, the wind blowing through his hair. He was muttering to himself something almost inaudible about his being a "superman". Quickly the doctor perceived the situation. He had forgotten to give the canceller signal. Believing the patient

out of his 'trance'. As a result of this, the patient, on his own, was reliving the moment he had been taken back to in dianetic treatment. He was now imagining himself to be a superman! Breathlessly Portune realized that a sudden movement on his part might make the man jump. A second thought flashed into his mind: "...maybe the state that Farham had been taken to has brought unrealized physical powers to him and maybe....just maybe...hemay actually be a superman!" He laughed softly to himself. Without having a chance to do anything, Portune saw the man leap from the window, to the sidewalk three stories below. Portune ran to the window. Down on the pavement stood Dudley Farham, unscathed and smiling. Farham looked up blankly.

To a passerby the situation would have been most extraordinary: A man standing in the street under a window was watching a lunatic hanging by his fingertips from the windowsill, shrieking wildly, CANCELED! CANCELED! C A N C E L L E D ! ! !

On a Silver Platter, continued from page ten) age on Earth. And the path it took this time would forever decide its destiny.

There was a smile of calm faith on the Lieutenant's lips as he greeted the first of his fellows.

THE END

more poetry:

THE UNGRAMMATICAL VENUSIANS

Two invisible beings of Venus
Plotted darkly to "share Earth between us".

Quoth they: "The cities we'll smash
And the people we'll bash.

They'll be sorry that they never seen us!"

-Jim Adams

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